

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT TACOMA

THE GEO GROUP, INC.,

Plaintiff,

No. 21-5313 \_\_\_\_\_

V.

## **COMPLAINT**

JAY INSLEE, in his official capacity as Governor of the State of Washington; BOB FERGUSON, in his official capacity as the Attorney General of the State of Washington; and MARY ROBNETT, in her official capacity as the Prosecuting Attorney for Pierce County, Washington,

#### Defendants.

1. Plaintiff The GEO Group, Inc. (“GEO”) brings this action for declaratory and injunctive relief against Defendants Governor Jay Inslee, Attorney General Bob Ferguson, and Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney Mary Robnett regarding Washington Engrossed House Bill 1090 (EHB 1090).

2. Through EHB 1090, the State of Washington (the “State”) asserts the power to shut down the Federal Government’s only dedicated immigration detention facility in the State, thereby subverting the congressionally funded and approved enforcement of federal immigration law by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) within the State of Washington. GEO operates this 1,575-bed immigration detention facility under contract with ICE.

3. Two hundred years ago, in the foundational case of *McCulloch v. Maryland*, Chief Justice John Marshall invoked the “great principle” that “the constitution and the laws made in pursuance thereof, and all treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, shall be the supreme law of the land; and the judges in every state shall be bound thereby, . . . .”

1 pursuance thereof are supreme; that they control the constitution and laws of the respective states,  
 2 and cannot be controlled by them.” 17 U.S. (4 Wheat.) 316, 426 (1819). This principle “so entirely  
 3 pervades the constitution, is so intermixed with the materials which compose it, so interwoven  
 4 with its web, so blended with its texture, as to be incapable of being separated from it, without  
 5 rending it into shreds.” *Id.* Based on this bedrock precept—derived from the Supremacy Clause of  
 6 the United States Constitution—it has been uncontested from *McCulloch* onward that “the  
 7 activities of the Federal Government are free from regulation by any state.” *Hancock v. Train*,  
 8 426 U.S. 167, 178 (1976) (quotation marks omitted).

9       4.      And just as the activities of the Federal Government may not be directly regulated  
 10 by any state, “[t]he government of the United States, . . . though limited in its powers, is supreme;  
 11 and its laws, when made in pursuance of the constitution, form the supreme law of the land,  
 12 ‘anything in the constitution or laws of any state to the contrary notwithstanding.’” *McCulloch*,  
 13 17 U.S (4 Wheat.) at 406; *see also Gibbons v. Ogden*, 22 U.S. (9 Wheat.) 1, 211 (1824) (Marshall,  
 14 C.J.) (explaining that the Supremacy Clause ensures that States not enact laws that “interfere with,  
 15 or are contrary to the laws of Congress”). This power of Congress to preempt inconsistent state  
 16 laws is, like the Federal Government’s immunity from state regulation, a “fundamental principle  
 17 of the Constitution.” *Crosby v. Nat’l Foreign Trade Council*, 530 U.S. 363, 372 (2000).

18       5.      Like the State of Maryland two hundred years ago, the State of Washington seeks  
 19 to subvert these principles, asserting the authority to regulate and undermine the United States  
 20 Government in the exercise of sovereign powers undoubtedly within the supreme sphere of federal  
 21 action. Even more egregiously, the State asserts the authority to do so by retroactively abrogating  
 22 a contract between the Federal Government and GEO. As it was two hundred years ago, it is the  
 23 duty of the federal courts to guard our constitutional order against this attack.

24       6.      There is no question that the Federal Government has the power to detain  
 25 individuals in anticipation of, or as a consequence of, federal immigration proceedings. *See, e.g.*,  
 26 *Wong v. United States*, 163 U.S. 228, 235 (1896). Nor is there any question that the Federal  
 27 Government has the authority to contract with private entities with expertise in the operation of

1 detention facilities to carry out its detention responsibilities. And, indeed, Congress has enacted  
2 statutes that clearly authorize the Executive Branch to house federal detainees in private facilities  
3 as that Branch deems appropriate. *See, e.g.*, 6 U.S.C. § 112(b)(2); 8 U.S.C. § 1231(g); 18 U.S.C.  
4 § 4013 note “Contracts for Space or Facilities”; 28 U.S.C. § 530C(a)(4). Yet, under the recently  
5 enacted EHB 1090, it is illegal for the Federal Government to enter into or renew such contracts  
6 for facilities in the State of Washington. This transparent attempt by the State to shut down the  
7 Federal Government’s detention efforts within Washington’s borders is a direct assault on the  
8 supremacy of federal law, and it cannot stand.

9       7.     GEO, as the operator of the only federal detention facility threatened by the State,  
10   brings this action to reassert the foundational principles laid down in *McCulloch v. Maryland* two  
11   centuries ago. This Court should declare EHB 1090 unconstitutional and enter a preliminary and  
12   permanent injunction restraining Defendants from enforcing the statute against GEO.

## **JURISDICTION & VENUE**

14        8.      GEO seeks relief on all claims pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201, 2202, and 2412.  
15      Additionally, on its Contracts Clause claim, GEO seeks relief pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983.

16       9.     This Court has jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1331 because the questions of  
17 whether EHB 1090 violates the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, whether it is  
18 preempted by federal law, and whether it violates the Constitution’s Contracts Clause are federal  
19 questions.

20       10.     Venue is proper in this District under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b) because a substantial  
21 part of the events or omissions giving rise to this claim occurred, or a substantial part of the  
22 property that is the subject of this action is situated, in this District. GEO's Northwest Immigration  
23 Processing Center (NWIPC) is located in this District, and the effects of EHB 1090 will be felt in  
24 this District.

## THE PARTIES

26        11. Plaintiff The GEO Group, Inc. is a corporation organized and existing under the  
27 laws of the State of Florida, with its principal place of business in Boca Raton, Florida.

12. Defendant Jay Inslee is the Governor of the State of Washington. He has “[t]he supreme executive power” of the State of Washington and is charged with “see[ing] that the laws are faithfully executed.” WASH. CONST. art. III, §§ 2, 5. As head of the Executive Department, he has a duty to “supervise the conduct of all executive and ministerial offices,” WASH. REV. CODE § 43.06.010(1), including the Attorney General, *see id.* § 43.06.010(5)–(7); *accord* WASH. CONST. §§ 1, 5. In light of these duties, Governor Inslee has responsibility for enforcing EHB 1090. He is sued in his official capacity.

13. Defendant Bob Ferguson is the Attorney General of the State of Washington. As “the attorney for state officers,” *Goldmark v. McKenna*, 172 Wash. 2d 568, 570, 259 P.3d 1095, 1097 (2011) (en banc) (citing WASH. CONST. art. III, § 21), the Attorney General has power to “[i]nstitute and prosecute all actions and proceedings for, or for the use of the state, which may be necessary in the execution of the duties of any state officer,” WASH. REV. CODE § 43.10.03(2). In light of these duties, Attorney General Ferguson has responsibility for enforcing EHB 1090. He is sued in his official capacity.

14. Defendant Mary Robnett is the Prosecuting Attorney for Pierce County, Washington. Under Washington law, she is charged with “[p]rosecut[ing] all criminal and civil actions in which the state or the county may be a party” and “defend[ing] all suits brought against the state or the county.” WASH. REV. CODE § 36.27.020(4). As Prosecuting Attorney, Ms. Robnett is “elected by and answerable to [her] local county . . . constituents” and is “invested by the State with a limited grant of power to represent the State of Washington to enforce the laws of the State within [her] county,” *State v. Bryant*, 146 Wash. 2d 90, 101–02, 42 P.3d 1278, 1284 (2002) (en banc). In light of these duties, Ms. Robnett has responsibility for enforcing EHB 1090. She is sued in her official capacity.

## **FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS**

## **I. Engrossed House Bill 1090**

15. On January 5, 2021, House Bill 1090 was introduced in the Washington Legislature. On adoption of a floor amendment on February 23, 2021, the bill became Engrossed

1 House Bill 1090.

2       16. EHB 1090 adds a new chapter to Title 70 (“Public Health and Safety”) of the  
3 Revised Code of Washington.

4       17. After stating legislative findings, Section 2 of EHB 1090 defines two key terms:

5           (1) “Detention facility” means any facility in which persons are  
6 incarcerated or otherwise involuntarily confined for purposes including  
prior to trial or sentencing, fulfilling the terms of a sentence imposed by a  
court, or for other judicial or administrative processes or proceedings.

7           (2) “Private detention facility” means a detention facility that is  
8 operated by a private, nongovernmental for-profit entity and operating  
9 pursuant to a contract or agreement with a federal, state, or local  
governmental entity.

10      18. In its central provision, Section 3 (“Prohibition on Private Incarceration”),  
11 EHB 1090 states:

12           (1) Except as provided in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, no person,  
13 business, or state or local governmental entity shall operate a private detention  
14 facility within the state or utilize a contract with a private detention facility within  
15 the state. No state or local governmental entity shall utilize a contract with a private  
16 detention facility outside of Washington state, except as provided in RCW  
72.68.010(2).

17           (2) A private detention facility that is operating pursuant to a valid contract with a  
18 governmental entity that was in effect prior to January 1, 2021, may remain in  
19 operation for the duration of that contract, not to include any extensions or  
modifications made to, or authorized by, that contract.

20           (3) In accordance with the legislative findings in section 1 of this act, this section  
21 does not apply if the involuntary confinement is at:

22                  (a) A facility providing rehabilitative, counseling, treatment, mental health,  
23 educational, or medical services to juveniles who are subject to Title 13  
RCW, or similarly applicable federal law;

24                  (b) A facility providing evaluation and treatment or forensic services to a  
25 person who has been civilly detained or is subject to an order of  
commitment by a court pursuant to chapter 10.77, 71.05, 71.09, or 71.34  
26 RCW, or similarly applicable federal law;

27                  (c) A facility used for the quarantine or isolation of persons for public health

1 reasons pursuant to RCW 43.20.050, or similarly applicable federal law;

2 (d) A facility used for work release under chapter 72.65 RCW, or similarly  
3 applicable federal law;

4 (e) A facility used for extraordinary medical placement;

5 (f) A facility used for residential substance use disorder treatment;

6 (g) A facility used to house persons pursuant to 18 U.S.C. Sec. 4013; or

7 (h) A facility owned and operated by federally recognized tribes and  
8 contracting with a government.

9 19. EHB 1090 thus amends Title 70 of the Revised Code of Washington to generally  
10 prohibit the operation of a private detention facility in the State of Washington, subject to a handful  
11 of exceptions.

12 20. EHB 1090 also generally prohibits the “utiliz[ation of] a contract with a private  
13 detention facility within the state,” subject to a handful of exceptions.

14 21. Section 1(7) of EHB 1090 states: “[I]t is the intent of the legislature to prohibit *the*  
15 *use of* private, for-profit prisons and detention facilities in the state” (emphasis added). Under  
16 Section 2(2), the only entities that “use” such facilities are “federal, state, or local governmental  
17 entit[ies].”

18 22. Thus, Section 3(1) “prohibit[s] the use of” private detention facilities by  
19 “federal . . . governmental entit[ies]” by prohibiting the Federal Government from “utiliz[ing] a  
20 contract with a private detention facility within the state.”

21 23. Notably, EHB 1090 excepts from its general prohibition “a valid contract with a  
22 governmental entity”—but only one “that was in effect prior to January 1, 2021” and only “for the  
23 duration of that contract, not to include any extensions or modifications made to, or authorized by,  
24 that contract.”

25 24. The Washington House rejected two separate amendments to make exceptions for  
26 federal operations from the scope of EHB 1090. H.B. 1090, H. Am. 103, <https://bit.ly/3dCdY8i>  
27 (striking “federal” from definition of “private detention facility”) (not adopted Feb. 23, 2021);

1 H.B. 1090, H. Am. 101, <https://bit.ly/2P7zrZ> (exempting from HB 1090 “[a] facility in which  
 2 health care services are provided by the federal government”) (not adopted Feb. 23, 2021).

3       25. In a Washington Senate committee hearing, the bill’s primary House sponsor  
 4 acknowledged that NWIPC was a “federal facility,” Hear’g of Sen. Hum. Servs., Reentry &  
 5 Rehabilitation Comm., <https://bit.ly/3xkCuTt> (Mar. 11, 2021 1:30 p.m.) (~22:56), and pointed to  
 6 a U.S. Senator’s related effort to “put[] a lot of pressure on the Federal Government to look at this  
 7 issue,” *id.* (~23:22). Similarly, in the same hearing, a Tacoma city councilmember urged that “the  
 8 system is broken” and advocated “shak[ing] up the system” and “changing an immigration  
 9 enforcement system” “by passing this legislation.” *Id.* (~1:10:26–46). At a follow-up hearing, one  
 10 State Senator brushed aside “preemption issues” while another characterized the bill as a response  
 11 to a “bipartisan problem that was put upon us from the Federal Government.” Hear’g of Sen. Hum.  
 12 Servs., Reentry & Rehabilitation Comm., <https://bit.ly/2RIfMnG> (Mar. 16, 2021 1:30 p.m.)  
 13 (~1:48:10–20; 1:49:26–30).

14       26. Governor Inslee signed EHB 1090 into law on April 14, 2021.

## 15 **II. U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Detention Facilities**

16       27. In November 2002, Congress assigned the border-enforcement functions of the  
 17 former Immigration and Naturalization Service to the newly created Bureau of Immigration and  
 18 Customs Enforcement, housed within the Department of Homeland Security.<sup>1</sup> The Bureau began  
 19 operations in March 2003 and was renamed U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in  
 20 March 2007.<sup>2</sup>

21       28. Congress has authorized or required the detention of aliens under several different  
 22 statutes and conditions. *See, e.g.*, 8 U.S.C. §§ 1225(b)(1)(B)(ii), 1225(b)(2)(A), 1226(a), 1226(c);  
 23 *see also Jennings v. Rodriguez*, 138 S. Ct. 830, 836–38 (2018).

24       29. Congress has granted the Secretary of Homeland Security broad authority “to make  
 25 contracts . . . as may be necessary and proper to carry out [his] responsibilities,” 6 U.S.C.

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26       <sup>1</sup> U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t, *Celebrating the History of ICE*, U.S. DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (Mar. 1,  
 27 2019), <https://bit.ly/35Jas68>.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

1 § 112(b)(2), including contracts with private parties. Congress has also granted the Secretary  
 2 authority to “carr[y] out,” “in [his] reasonable discretion,” the activities of ICE “through *any*  
 3 *means*, including . . . through contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements with non-Federal  
 4 parties,” except to the extent that such agreements are otherwise precluded by federal law.  
 5 28 U.S.C. § 530C(a)(4) (emphasis added).

6       30.     Congress has also directed that “[t]he [Secretary] shall arrange for appropriate  
 7 places of detention for aliens detained pending removal or a decision on removal,” 8 U.S.C.  
 8 § 1231(g)(1), and it has instructed that ICE “shall consider the availability for purchase or lease of  
 9 any existing prison, jail, detention center, or other comparable facility suitable for [detention]”  
 10 “[p]rior to initiating any project for the construction of any new detention facility,” *id.*  
 11 § 1231(g)(2).

12       31.     Finally, in 2000, Congress enacted a statute stating: “Notwithstanding any other  
 13 provision of law, . . . the [Secretary] hereafter may enter into contracts and other agreements, of  
 14 any reasonable duration, for detention or incarceration space or facilities, including related  
 15 services, on any reasonable basis.” 18 U.S.C. § 4013 note “Contracts for Space or Facilities.”<sup>3</sup>

16       32.     Thus, Congress has granted ICE, the Secretary’s designee, the discretion to use  
 17 private contractors to arrange for detention. *See United States v. California*, 921 F.3d 865, 882 n.7  
 18 (9th Cir. 2019).

19       33.     Pursuant to this authority, ICE “manages and oversees the nation’s civil  
 20 immigration detention system.”<sup>4</sup>

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21       <sup>3</sup> Although 8 U.S.C. § 1231(g), 28 U.S.C. § 530C(a), and the note accompanying 18 U.S.C. § 4013 all  
 22 mention the “Attorney General,” the Homeland Security Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135, transferred  
 23 the immigration-enforcement functions and programs of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to the  
 24 Secretary of Homeland Security, *see* 6 U.S.C. § 202(3); *id.* § 251(2); 8 U.S.C. § 1103(a)(1); provided that the Secretary  
 25 “shall have all functions relating to the [INS] that any other official could by law exercise in relation to the agency  
 26 immediately before such transfer,” 6 U.S.C. § 551(d)(2); and specified that for those transferred functions “reference  
 27 in any other Federal law to any . . . officer . . . the functions of which are so transferred shall be deemed to refer to the  
 28 Secretary,” 6 U.S.C. § 557. Therefore, insofar as each of the three provisions listed above relate to the immigration  
 29 detention-and-removal program, their references to the “Attorney General” shall be deemed to refer to the Secretary.  
*See, e.g., Reyna ex rel. J.F.G. v. Hott*, 921 F.3d 204, 208 n.\* (4th Cir. 2019) (explaining that the mention of the  
 30 Attorney General in 8 U.S.C. § 1231(g) shall be deemed to refer to the Secretary); *cf. Clark v. Martinez*, 543 U.S. 371,  
 374 n.1 (2005).

31       <sup>4</sup> U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t, *Detention Management*, DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (Apr. 14, 2021),  
<https://bit.ly/2ZvGnGO>.

34. Whereas ICE's immigration-enforcement efforts are usually aimed at the interior of the United States, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) enforces immigration law at the border.<sup>5</sup>

35. ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO) manages a "docket of more than 3.2 million cases" of "active removal cases for aliens not in ICE custody."<sup>6</sup>

36. During FY 2019 alone, “the number of individuals apprehended or found inadmissible nationwide totaled 1,148,024, an increase of 68 percent over the previous fiscal year.”<sup>7</sup>

37. “Typically, when an alien is apprehended by CBP, he or she is transferred to ICE custody pending removal proceedings.”<sup>8</sup>

38. In FY 2019, the number of book-ins to ICE facilities was 510,854,<sup>9</sup> yet the projected number of beds available for ICE detainees for that year was only 52,000.<sup>10</sup>

39. And “[f]illing every available bed in a detention facility would necessitate housing detainees of varied threat levels together, posing serious safety concerns for detainees, officers, staff, and facility owners. ICE consequently maintains a target utilization rate of about 85 to 90% of total facility capacity,” which “also allows for flexibility to respond to emergencies or other unforeseen circumstances that might require immediate availability of detention beds (e.g., charter flight cancellations, surges, or smuggling loads).”<sup>11</sup> In the facilities ICE currently uses, “ICE meets or exceeds its target utilization in almost every instance.”<sup>12</sup>

40. Thus, according to Matthew Albence, Acting Director of ICE through August 2020, “[a]t the peak of the crisis in August 2019, ERO had over 56,000 aliens in detention, and both

<sup>5</sup> STATEMENT OF MATTHEW T. ALBENCE, ACTING DIR., U.S. IMMIGRATION & CUSTOMS ENF'T, THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 PRESIDENT'S BUDGET REQUEST 3 (July 25, 2019), <https://bit.ly/2Blfp9>.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't, *U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Fiscal Year 2019 Enforcement and Removal Operations Report* 4 & n.2, DEP'T OF HOMELAND SEC., <https://bit.ly/3xbynZw>.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* at 3.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at 4.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* at 5.

<sup>10</sup> FY 2019 Budget in Brief 4, DEP'T OF HOMELAND SEC., <https://bit.ly/32yfwtK>.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf't, *Budget Overview: Fiscal Year 2020 Congressional Justification ICE-O&S-119*, DEPT' OF HOMELAND SEC. (2019), <https://bit.ly/336G3g3>.

12 *Id.*

1 ERO and CBP were forced to conduct unprecedented direct releases of hundreds of thousands of  
 2 aliens into the United States. During this time, ICE directly released approximately 200,00[0]  
 3 family unit members from custody.”<sup>13</sup>

4 41. Southwest land border encounters have almost *tripled* since August 2019.<sup>14</sup>

5 42. Even in April 2019, ICE’s ability to house detainees was “already dire,”<sup>15</sup> and  
 6 Homeland Security officials were “struggling to identify new locations where migrants can be held  
 7 in detention.”<sup>16</sup>

8 43. As of March 2020, ICE “own[ed] only five detention facilities,” and “even those  
 9 are contractor run.”<sup>17</sup>

10 44. Just procuring a new ICE facility, let alone staffing and funding it, is a “years long  
 11 process.”<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, “Congress made decisions many years ago... that contract detention  
 12 facilities were certainly a much more cost effective way to go with regard to detaining individuals  
 13 in the immigration context.”<sup>19</sup> Moreover, during a “massive surge at the border,” contractors are  
 14 necessary to respond effectively.<sup>20</sup>

15 45. Consequently, efforts to close these private facilities have “created additional  
 16 expenses for [ICE],” forcing it “to increase transportation cost [and] detail person[nel] to open  
 17 detention facilities.”<sup>21</sup>

18 46. And such efforts have “had a correspondingly negative impact on... aliens  
 19 because... individuals that used to be kept within their communities where their families could  
 20 go visit them, where their attorneys could readily have access to them, [ICE] is now having to

21  
 22       <sup>13</sup> House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security Holds Hearing on Fiscal 2021 Budget Request  
          for Immigration and Customs Enforcement 45 (Mar. 11, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3n487vs> [hereinafter 2021 ICE Budget  
          Hearing].

23       <sup>14</sup> U.S. Customs & Border Prot., *Southwest Land Border Encounters*, DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC. (Apr. 23,  
          2021) (62,707 in August 2019; 172, 331 in March 2021), <https://bit.ly/2Qcc4m6>.

24       <sup>15</sup> Caitlin Dickerson, *ICE Faces Migrant Detention Crunch as Border Chaos Spills Into Interior of the*  
          *Country*, N.Y. TIMES (Apr. 22, 2019), <https://nyti.ms/2BEKvGS>.

25       <sup>16</sup> *Id.*

26       <sup>17</sup> 2021 ICE Budget Hearing at 26.

27       <sup>18</sup> *Id.* at 27.

28       <sup>19</sup> *Id.* at 26.

29       <sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 27.

30       <sup>21</sup> *Id.* at 56.

1 send . . . four, 500, 1,000 miles away.”<sup>22</sup>

2       **A. Washington’s Lone Dedicated ICE Facility: Northwest ICE Processing Center**

3       47. There is currently one dedicated ICE detention facilities in the State of Washington:  
 4 the Northwest ICE Processing Center (NWIPC) at 1623 East J Street, Tacoma, WA 98421,<sup>23</sup> with  
 5 a capacity of 1,575 beds.

6       48. NWIPC is operated by GEO pursuant to a contract with ICE.

7       49. NWIPC was built by Corrections Services Corp. under contract with the U.S.  
 8 Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). It opened for operation in April 2004 under contract  
 9 with ICE’s predecessor, the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (the “Bureau”), to  
 10 house the Bureau’s detainees.

11       50. GEO acquired the facility when it acquired the Corrections Services Corp. in 2005.  
 12 Since the acquisition, GEO has expanded the facility, in multiple phases, up to a capacity of 1,575  
 13 beds.

14       51. Since that time, GEO has housed detainees at NWIPC under contract with the  
 15 Bureau and—after the Bureau’s renaming—with ICE.

16       52. The current contract was signed on September 24, 2015, effective September 28,  
 17 2015, for a base period of one year. To extend beyond that period, the contract originally had nine  
 18 options of one year each and one half-year option. If all of the options were exercised by ICE, the  
 19 total period of performance would have lasted through March 27, 2026.

20       53. ICE exercised its option five times, most recently on May 19, 2020, to extend the  
 21 contract through September 27, 2021. Then, on January 29, 2021, ICE and GEO modified the  
 22 contract, removing remaining unexercised option years, and establishing instead a five-year  
 23 performance period running from September 28, 2020, through September 27, 2025.

24       54. Between January 2019 and April 2021, NWIPC detained an average of 837 persons  
 25 per day. Prior to COVID-19-related restrictions, in 2019, the average number of persons detained

26       <sup>22</sup> *Id.* at 56.

27       <sup>23</sup> U.S. Immigr. & Customs Enf’t, *ICE Facilities Data, FY21 YTD*, DEP’T OF HOMELAND SEC.,  
<https://bit.ly/3aqGSGI> (linked under “Detention Statistics”).

1 was 1,268 per day. Since the increase in availability of the COVID-19 vaccine, there has been an  
 2 upward trend in ICE populations nationwide.

3       55.     GEO has continued to operate NWIPC under the terms of the new ICE modification  
 4 of January 29, 2021, in much the same manner as it was operating prior to signing this  
 5 modification.

6           **B. Non-Dedicated ICE Detention Facilities**

7       56.     In addition to NWIPC, the single dedicated ICE detention facility in Washington,  
 8 there is one other facility in Washington that, while not dedicated to ICE detention, might hold a  
 9 limited number of ICE detainees. The Federal Bureau of Prisons operates the Federal Detention  
 10 Center SeaTac at 2425 South 200th Street in Seattle, Washington 98198. That facility has a  
 11 maximum capacity of 900 to 1,000 inmates, but it is multi-mission, holding criminal defendants  
 12 pending trial or sentencing, convicted defendants serving a prison term, as well as a small number  
 13 of ICE detainees from time to time.<sup>24</sup> As of October 2018, there were *no* ICE detainees in this  
 14 facility,<sup>25</sup> and even when the facility holds detainees, it tends to hold no more than twenty  
 15 detainees. According to ICE leadership, the facility does not currently have beds available for ICE  
 16 detainees.

17       57.     Also in Washington, the Cowlitz County Juvenile Detention Center held one  
 18 juvenile detainee, as of February 9, 2021, but that facility has terminated its contract to hold  
 19 juvenile ICE detainees, effective at the beginning of April.<sup>26</sup>

20       58.     Absent relief from this Court, EHB 1090 will force GEO to close NWIPC. Thus,  
 21 under EHB 1090, there would be no dedicated ICE detention facility in the State of Washington,  
 22 and ICE would be forced to move detainees hundreds, if not thousands of miles away from their  
 23 families and friends to facilities in other states.

24 Fed. Det. Ctr., *Inmate Admission and Orientation Handbook* 6, U.S. DEP'T OF JUST., FED. BUREAU OF PRISONS (Dec. 20, 2013), <https://bit.ly/3n3lDQ2>.

25 Conrad Wilson, *ICE Appears To End Use of Federal Prisons for Immigrant Detainees*, NAT'L PUB. RADIO (Oct. 20, 2018), <https://n.pr/3tBgKAr>.

26 Esmy Jimenez, *The Last Immigrant Youth Jail in the Country Moves to End Contract with ICE*, KUOW/NPR (Feb. 8, 2021), <https://bit.ly/3dAJbc8> ("Cowlitz County's contract with ICE will end in 60 days.").

1       59.     The location nearest to NWIPC that may have available beds for ICE detainees is  
 2 the Yuba County Jail, in California, which is 659 miles away, by drive, and has a total capacity—  
 3 for county prisoners and ICE detainees alike—of roughly 430 beds,<sup>27</sup> 220 of which might be used  
 4 for ICE detainees.<sup>28</sup> Yuba County has faced pressure to end its contract with ICE.<sup>29</sup>

5 **III. Financial Impact of EHB 1090 on GEO**

6       60.     If EHB 1090 forces GEO to close its ICE detention facility in Washington, GEO  
 7 would lose nearly \$264 million in revenue from September 28, 2021 through September 27, 2025.

8       61.     GEO has invested almost \$101 million in acquiring, constructing, outfitting, and  
 9 otherwise making ready for use NWIPC, all of which would be lost if GEO were no longer able to  
 10 use that facility for its intended purposes. The replacement cost of this detention facility is \$110  
 11 million.

12       62.     Thus, if EHB 1090 forces GEO to close NWIPC, GEO could lose roughly \$365  
 13 million in capital investment and future revenue over four years.

14 **COUNT I: VIOLATION OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL IMMUNITY  
 15 (DIRECT REGULATION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT)**

16       63.     Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference the allegations of the preceding  
 17 paragraphs.

18       64.     GEO, as a contractor for the United States, enjoys and is clothed with the Federal  
 19 Government's intergovernmental immunity. *See Goodyear Atomic Corp. v. Miller*, 486 U.S. 174,  
 20 180–81 (1988); *Boeing Co. v. Movassagh*, 768 F.3d 832, 839 (9th Cir. 2014).

21       65.     Under the Supremacy Clause of the United States Constitution, “the activities of  
 22 the Federal Government are free from regulation by any state.” *Mayo v. United States*, 319 U.S.  
 23 441, 445 (1943). State laws run afoul of intergovernmental immunity when they “involve[] a

24  
 25       <sup>27</sup> See *Yuba County Jail Suspending Visitation Due to COVID-19 Concerns*, YUBA CNTY. SHERIFF'S DEP'T  
 (Dec. 16, 2020), <https://bit.ly/3tMMi6q>.

26       <sup>28</sup> Andrea Castillo, *Judge Largely Upholds California Ban on Private Prisons in Tentative Ruling*, L.A.  
 TIMES (July 16, 2020 6:51 PM PT), <https://lat.ms/3xhHfgr>.

27       <sup>29</sup> Don Thompson & Amy Taxin, *California To End its Use of Private, For-Profit Prisons*, ASSOCIATED  
 PRESS (Oct. 11, 2019), <https://bit.ly/2Pgb6C6>.

1 direct, physical interference with federal activities . . . or some direct, immediate burden on the  
 2 performance of the [federal] functions.” *Ry. Mail Ass’n v. Corsi*, 326 U.S. 88, 96 (1945).

3       66. By prohibiting the use and operation of federal private detention facilities in the  
 4 State, and by applying that prohibition retroactively, EHB 1090 substantially interferes with  
 5 Federal Government operations.

6       67. EHB 1090 substantially interferes with ICE’s ability to carry out its detention  
 7 responsibilities for the Federal Government.

8       68. Congress has not authorized the State to regulate the Federal Government’s  
 9 activities with respect to federal detention facilities like GEO’s.

10      69. EHB 1090 is unconstitutional and invalid as applied to GEO’s operations on behalf  
 11 of ICE.

## 12           **COUNT II: FEDERAL PREEMPTION OF INCONSISTENT STATE LAW**

13      70. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference the allegations of the preceding  
 14 paragraphs.

15      71. Federal immigration law provides that the Secretary of Homeland Security “shall  
 16 arrange for appropriate places of detention for aliens detained pending removal or a decision on  
 17 removal,” and “[w]hen United States facilities are unavailable or facilities adapted or suitably  
 18 located for detention are unavailable for rental, the [Secretary] may expend . . . amounts necessary  
 19 to acquire land and to acquire, build, remodel, repair, and operate facilities . . . necessary for  
 20 detention.” 8 U.S.C. § 1231(g)(1). Congress has instructed that ICE “shall consider the availability  
 21 for purchase *or lease* of any existing prison, jail, detention center, or other comparable facility  
 22 suitable for [detention]” before beginning any project to develop a new detention facility. 8 U.S.C.  
 23 § 1231(g)(2) (emphasis added).

24      72. In enacting Section 1231(g)(1), “Congress . . . placed the responsibility of  
 25 determining where aliens are detained within the discretion of the [Secretary].” *Comm. of Cent.*  
*Am. Refugees v. INS*, 795 F.2d 1434, 1440 (9th Cir. 1986). That discretion is “broad.” *Id.*

27      73. To effectively arrange for appropriate places of detention for removal aliens,

1 Congress further granted the Secretary authority “to make contracts . . . as may be necessary and  
 2 proper to carry out [his] responsibilities,” 6 U.S.C. § 112(b)(2), including contracts with private  
 3 parties.

4       74. Congress further authorized the Secretary, in his “reasonable discretion,” to carry  
 5 out the immigration enforcement activities of the Department of Homeland Security “through any  
 6 means,” including “through contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements with non-Federal  
 7 parties.” 28 U.S.C. § 530C(a)(4).

8       75. Congress has also authorized the Secretary to “enter into contracts and other  
 9 agreements, of any reasonable duration, for detention or incarceration space or facilities, *including*  
 10 *related services, on any reasonable basis.*” 18 U.S.C. § 4013 note “Contracts for Space or  
 11 Facilities” (emphasis added).

12       76. Where Congress delegates broad discretion to an Executive Branch official to  
 13 achieve some end, state laws are preempted when they frustrate the natural effect of that delegation  
 14 and blunt the consequences of Executive acts taken pursuant to the delegation. *See Crosby v. Nat'l*  
 15 *Foreign Trade Council*, 530 U.S. 363, 372–377 (2000).

16       77. State laws are also preempted whenever they evince a second-guessing of the  
 17 Federal Government's contracting choices made in conformity with enumerated congressional  
 18 standards. *See Gartrell Constr. Inc. v. Aubry*, 940 F.2d 437, 438–41 (9th Cir. 1991).

19       78. EHB 1090, by prohibiting the Secretary of Homeland Security from using private  
 20 detention facilities, overrides Congress' determination to grant him discretion to place federal  
 21 immigration detainees in private detention facilities and prohibits a means of federal detention that  
 22 Congress clearly authorized.

23       79. EHB 1090 also impermissibly second-guesses the Federal Government's  
 24 contracting decisions by displacing the Federal Government's determination of what immigration  
 25 detention facilities are “appropriate,” 8 U.S.C. § 1231(g)(1), and whether using private prisoner  
 26 detention facilities is “necessary and proper,” 6 U.S.C. § 112(b)(2), or “reasonable,” 28 U.S.C.  
 27 § 530C(a)(4).

80. EHB 1090 is unconstitutional and invalid as applied to GEO's operations on behalf of ICE.

## **COUNT III: VIOLATION OF THE CONTRACTS CLAUSE**

81. Plaintiff re-alleges and incorporates by reference the allegations of the preceding paragraphs.

82. Article 1, Section 10 of the United States Constitution expressly provides that “[n]o State shall . . . pass any . . . Law impairing the Obligation of Contracts . . .”

8        83. By retroactively prohibiting the January 29, 2021 modification to the Federal  
9 Government’s contract with GEO for NWIPC, EHB 1090 flatly prohibits the performance of—  
10 and thus “impair[s]”—that contract.

11       84. Courts have interpreted the Contracts Clause to invalidate a state law that has  
12 “operated as a substantial impairment of a contractual relationship,” unless that state law “is drawn  
13 in an ‘appropriate’ and ‘reasonable’ way to advance a ‘significant and legitimate public purpose.’”  
14 *Sveen v. Melin*, 138 S. Ct. 1815, 1821–22 (2018) (citations omitted).

15        85.     EHB 1090's cancellation of the Federal Government's contract with GEO for  
16 NWIPC substantially impairs that contract because it wholly abrogates it, contrary to either party's  
17 intent, in circumstances justifying strong reliance, without providing the parties means to avoid  
18 the impairment. *Cf. id.* at 1822.

19        86. Likewise, EHB 1090 neither appropriately nor reasonably advances its asserted  
20 interests. *See* EHB 1090 § 1, Ch. 30, Laws of 2021, 67th Legis., 2021 Reg. Sess. (Apr. 14, 2021).

21        87. It is inappropriate for state governments to try to control federal contracts as means  
22 to achieving their ends.

23        88. It is unreasonable for Washington to abrogate permanently the contract between the  
24 Federal Government and GEO for the housing of federal immigration detainees by novel  
25 legislation taking immediate, retroactive effect with a particularized impact on GEO and ICE,  
26 notwithstanding GEO's investments and ICE's dependency on NWIPC as the only dedicated  
27 facility available to house its detainees in the State of Washington, all while refusing to protect

from a supposedly general and pressing threat, whole categories of detainees, including juveniles, disregarding their unique vulnerabilities.

3       89. The unreasonableness of EHB 1090 is all the more apparent given that the  
4 legislative findings in EHB 1090 speak only to concerns posed by private detention facilities  
5 *nationally* but says nothing about NWIPC or any other Washington facility. *See* EHB 1090 § 1.  
6 Therefore, Washington cannot reasonably assert that the operation of private detention facilities in  
7 the State poses a uniquely troubling emergency justifying the immediate, retroactive nullification  
8 of GEO's contract with ICE.

## **PRAYER FOR RELIEF**

10 WHEREFORE, The GEO Group, Inc., respectfully requests that this Court enter an order  
11 and judgment:

- a. Declaring that Engrossed House Bill 1090 violates the Supremacy Clause and the Contracts Clause of the United States Constitution and is unconstitutional as applied to GEO in its operation of detention facilities for ICE;
  - b. Preliminarily and permanently enjoining Defendants, as well as their successors, agents, employees, and all those under their supervision, from enforcing, whether prospectively or retroactively, Engrossed House Bill 1090 against GEO in its operation of detention facilities for ICE;
  - c. Declaring that Plaintiff's current ICE contract with the Federal Government for the NWIPC is valid through September 27, 2025;
  - d. Awarding attorneys' fees and costs as permitted by law; and
  - e. Granting such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

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1 DATED this 29th day of April, 2021.  
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4 *Attorneys for Plaintiff The GEO Group, Inc.*  
5  
6

7 By /s/ Harry Korrell  
8

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